



Tay Road Bridge

TAY ROAD BRIDGE JOINT BOARD

The Annual Governance Statement

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Date: 19 June 2023	Bridge Manager

TAY ROAD BRIDGE JOINT BOARD
ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

Scope of Responsibility

Tay Road Bridge Joint Board is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and appropriate standards. This is to ensure that public funds and assets at its disposal are safeguarded, properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently, effectively, and ethically. The Joint Board also has a duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way its functions are carried out.

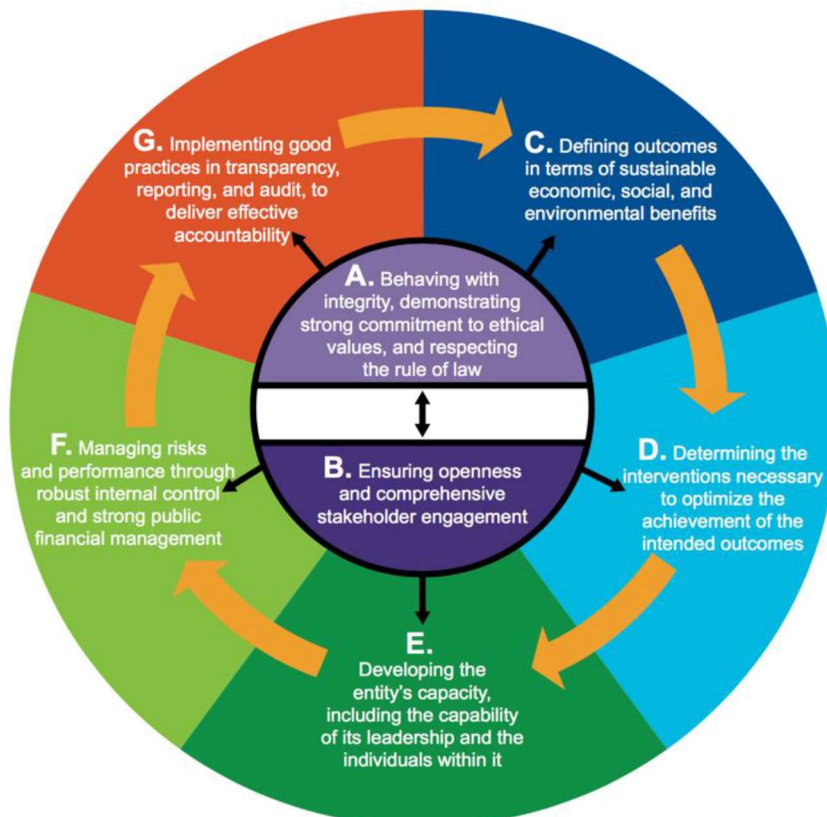
In discharging these responsibilities elected members and senior officers are responsible for implementing effective arrangements for governing the Joint Board's affairs and facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, including arrangements for the management of risk.

To this end the Joint Board will be asked to approve and adopt an updated Local Code of Corporate Governance that is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy / Society of Local Authority Chief Executives) framework *Delivering Good Governance in Local Government (2016)*. This statement explains how Tay Road Bridge Joint Board delivers good governance and reviews the effectiveness of these arrangements.

The Joint Board's Governance Framework

The governance framework comprises the systems, processes, cultures and values by which the Joint Board is directed and controlled. It also describes the way it engages with and accounts to stakeholders. It enables the Joint Board to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost-effective services.

The framework reflects the arrangements in place to meet the seven supporting principles of effective corporate governance. These are as follows:



Within the overall control arrangements, the system of internal financial control is intended to ensure that assets are safeguarded, transactions are authorised and properly recorded, and material errors or irregularities are either prevented or would be detected within a timely period. It is based on a framework

of regular management information, financial regulations, administrative procedures and management supervision.

The overall control arrangements include:

- Reporting financial and operating information regularly to Joint Board meetings;
- Clearly defined Standing Orders and Schemes of Administration covering Financial Regulations, Tender Procedures and Delegation of Powers;
- Approved Counter Fraud and Corruption Policy which includes "whistle-blowing" arrangements under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998;
- Approved Anti-Bribery Policy;
- Setting targets to measure financial and service performance;
- Formal revenue and capital budgetary control systems and procedures; and
- The assurances provided by Internal Audit through their independent review work of the Joint Board's internal control systems.

Additionally, in order to support Chief Financial Officers in the fulfilment of their duties and to ensure that local authority organisations have access to effective financial advice of the highest level, CIPFA's *Role of the Chief Financial Officer (2016)* has introduced a "comply or explain" requirement in the Annual Accounts. The Treasurer complies with the principles set out in CIPFA's *Role of the Chief Financial Officer (2016)*. The new CIPFA's *Financial Management Code (2019)* (FM Code) is designed to support good practice in financial management and to assist local authorities in demonstrating their financial sustainability. For the first time the FM Code sets out the standards of financial management for local authorities. Local government finance in the UK is governed by primary legislation, regulation and professional standards as supported by statutory provision. The general financial management of a local authority, however, has not until now been supported by a professional code. The FM Code has been introduced because the exceptional financial circumstances faced by local authorities have revealed concerns about fundamental weaknesses in financial management, particularly in relation to organisations that may be unable to maintain services in the future. The board complies with the principles and standards set out in CIPFA's FM Code (2019).

Review of Effectiveness

Members and officers of the Joint Board are committed to the concept of sound governance and the effective delivery of Joint Board services and take into account comments made by internal and external auditors and prepare action plans as appropriate. The effectiveness of the governance framework is reviewed annually by senior officers. Their review of the Local Code of Corporate Governance, includes the completion of a self-assessment of their own arrangements. This involved the completion of a 94-point checklist covering the seven supporting principles defined in CIPFA/SOLACE's *Delivering Good Governance in Local Government (2016)*. This indicated a high level of compliance.

In addition, as part of the Annual Governance Statement process the Bridge Manager completes a self-assessment checklist of the Board's own governance, risk management and internal control arrangements. This involved the completion of a 75-point checklist covering eight key governance areas of Service Planning and Performance Management; Internal Control Environment; Fraud Prevention and Detection; Budgeting, Accounting and Financial Control; Risk Management and Business Continuity; Asset Management; Partnerships; and Information Governance. This again indicated a high level of compliance.

The Joint Board's Internal Audit provider conforms with Public Sector Internal Audit Standards and reports to the Joint Board. Internal Audit undertakes an annual programme of work, which is reported to the Joint Board. The Internal Auditor provides an independent opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the system of internal control. In the opinion of the Joint Board's Internal Auditor, overall the Board operates adequate internal control systems as defined in the Audit Needs Assessment. The audit and assurance work has not identified any significant gaps in the Board's control environment that would increase the risk of financial loss. This opinion was arrived at by taking into consideration the internal audit, risk management and other assurance work that has been undertaken during 2023/2024 and in previous years since the internal auditor's original appointment in 2010.

Continuous Improvement Agenda

The Joint Board's progress against the Continuous Improvement Agenda items for 2023/2024 are detailed in Appendix 1. Several items are still in progress and have been carried forward to be actioned in 2024/2025. Additional areas for improvement have also been identified by Joint Board officers and these are included on Appendix 2 and form the Continuous Improvement Action Plan for 2024/2025. These were identified in the self-assessment checklists that were completed as part of the Joint Board's assurance gathering process and also from Internal Audit reviews.

It is proposed that during 2024/2025 steps will be taken to address the outstanding items identified in the Continuous Improvement Agenda to further enhance the Joint Board's governance arrangements.

The annual review demonstrates sufficient evidence that the code's principles of delivering good governance in local government operated effectively and the Joint Board complies with the Local Code of Corporate Governance in all significant respects.

Councillor Gary Holt
Chair
Tay Road Bridge Joint Board
9 September 2024

Alan Hutchison
Bridge Manager
Tay Road Bridge Joint Board
9 September 2024

TAY ROAD BRIDGE JOINT BOARD

IMPROVEMENT AGENDA FOR 2023/2024 WITH PROGRESS UPDATES

ORIGINAL IMPROVEMENT AGENDA					PROGRESS UPDATE		
	Improvement	Source	Source Date	Responsible Officer	Target Completion Date	Actual Completion Date	Comments (e.g. Estimated Completion Date, Reasons for delays, etc.)
1	Review all Board Human Resource (HR) policies to provide comfort that the Board's policies are aligned with Dundee City Council (DCC) and up-to-date with legislation.	Annual Governance Statement self-assessment checklist, section 2: Internal Control Environment.	Carried forward from 2022 / 2023. In progress.	Bridge Manager	31/12/2023		All TRBJB Employee / HR policies have been updated and now align with DCC. TRBJB will be appointing a new Operations Manager in Summer 2024 and this person will have experience of HR procedures along with staff and union consultation experience. Once this position is filled, the Bridge Manager will instruct formal consultation with staff and Trade Unions regarding the new policies before they are introduced. Some progress but carry forward. *
2	Revise Fraud Guidelines.	Local Code of Corporate Governance 2022/2023 (Principle A: Integrity and Ethics) and Annual Governance Statement self-assessment checklist, section 3: Fraud Prevention and Detection.	New for 2023/2024.	Treasurer	31/03/2024	04/03/2024	New Counter Fraud and Corruption Policy was approved at March 2024 Board meeting and circulated to staff.
3	Induction training for new board members.	Local Code of Corporate Governance 2022/2023 (Principle A: Integrity and Ethics).	New for 2023/2024.	Bridge Manager / Treasurer	31/03/2024		Not completed due to resource constraints. *
4	Equality and Diversity and Human Rights training to be rolled-out to all staff.	Local Code of Corporate Governance 2022/2023 (Principle A: Integrity and Ethics).	New for 2023/2024.	Bridge Manager	31/03/2024		Some staff have completed E-learning and the remainder will complete during 2024. *
5	Data Protection training to be rolled-out to all staff.	Local Code of Corporate Governance 2022/2023 (Principle A: Integrity and	New for 2023/2024.	Bridge Manager	31/03/2024		Some staff have completed E-learning and the remainder will complete during 2024. *

		Ethics and Principle F: Managing Risks and Performance).					
6	Improve communication of Risk Assessments Method Statements (RAMS) to staff.	Annual Governance Statement self-assessment checklist, section 2: Internal Control Environment.	New for 2023/2024.	Bridge Manager	31/03/2024		In progress. The plan is to create video of day-to-day RAMS so that they are more easily understood by all. Also planning to create “RAMS” champions to further develop safety culture. Bridge Manager to cover Health and Safety issues that might arise at regular staff face-to-face presentations. *
7	Meetings with service providers to assess the quality of services provided under Service Level Agreements (SLAs).	Local Code of Corporate Governance 2022/2023 (Principle E: Developing the Entity’s Capacity) and Annual Governance Statement self-assessment checklist, section 7: Partnerships.	New for 2023/2024.	Bridge Manager	31/03/2024		No progress due to resource constraints. *

* Carried forward items have been included in Appendix 2 with new target completion dates.

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IMPROVEMENT AGENDA FOR 2024/2025

	Improvement	Source	Source Date	Responsible Officer	Target Completion Date
1	Review all Board Human Resource policies to provide comfort that the Board's policies are aligned with Dundee City Council (DCC) and up-to-date with legislation.	Annual Governance Statement self-assessment checklist, section 2: Internal Control Environment.	Carried forward from 2022/2023. In progress.	Bridge Manager	31/12/2024
2	Induction training for new board members.	Local Code of Corporate Governance 2022/2023 (Principle A: Integrity and Ethics).	Carried forward from 2023/2024.	Bridge Manager / Treasurer	31/03/2025
3	Equality and Diversity and Human Rights training to be rolled-out to all staff.	Local Code of Corporate Governance 2022/2023 (Principle A: Integrity and Ethics).	Carried forward from 2023/2024. In progress.	Bridge Manager	31/03/2025
4	Data Protection training to be rolled-out to all staff.	Local Code of Corporate Governance 2022/2023 (Principle A: Integrity and Ethics and Principle F: Managing Risks and Performance).	Carried forward from 2023/2024. In progress.	Bridge Manager	31/03/2025
5	Improve communication of Risk Assessments Method Statements (RAMS) to staff.	Annual Governance Statement self-assessment checklist, section 2: Internal Control Environment.	Carried forward from 2023/2024. In progress.	Bridge Manager	31/03/2025
6	Meetings with service providers to assess the quality of services provided under Service Level Agreements (SLAs).	Local Code of Corporate Governance 2022/2023 (Principle E: Developing the Entity's Capacity) and Annual Governance Statement self-assessment checklist, section 7: Partnerships.	Carried forward from 2023/2024.	Bridge Manager	31/03/2025
7	New Strategic Plan required for 2025 to 2030.	Local Code of Corporate Governance 2023/2024 (Principles A to G).	New for 2024/2025.	Bridge Manager	31/03/2025